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Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

INRE-00 CIAE-00 SCCT-01 SP-02 PM-03 OMB-01 L-01 SY-02

OPR-01 A-01 NEA-07 OC-01 CCO-00 /049 W
---------- 099599
O 140922Z SEP 75
FM AMCONSUL ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3563
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON IMMEDIATE
COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN IMMEDIATE
COMIDEASTFOR IMMEDIATE
NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA IMMEDIATE
NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI IMMEDIATE
CNO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0782

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MARR PINS PCNT US ET
SUBJECT: KAGNEW STATION

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 10988 (NOTAL)
B. CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON 131249Z SEP 75
C. NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA 132336Z SEP 75
D. CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON 131711Z SEP 75

1. GENERALLY CONCUR WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REF A.
AT PRESENT, BASIC PROBLEM TO BE FACED IS THAT US COMMUNICATIONS
FACILITIES IN ERITREA ARE NOW OPENLY IDENTIFIED AS TARGETS
BY THE INSURGENTS. THIS IS EVIDENT NOT ONLY AS CONSEQUENCE
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FRIDAY NIGHT'S ATTACK ON KAGNEW TRACT DELTA AND KIDNAPPING

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TWO AMERICANS, BUT OBVIOUS FROM ELF STATEMENTS CARRIED ON
DAMASCUS AND BAGDAD RADIO (HEARD HERE MORNING SEPT. 14 ON BBC)
TAKING CREDIT FOR THE TRACT DELTA ATTACK AND ANNOUNCING THAT
ATTACKS ON US "BASES" IN ERITREA WOULD CONTINUE. IT WOULD
APPEAR THAT INSURGENTS ARE FINALLY REACTING TO LAST MARCH'S
ANNOUNCEMENT OF US POLICY DECISION TO PROVIDE ARMS RESUPPLY
ASSISTANCE TO THE EPMG THAT COULD BE USED AGAINST THEM IN
ERITREA: IF, IN FACT, INSURGENTS INTEND TO PRESS HOME
CONTINUED ATTACKS ON KAGNEW INSTALLATIONS, US POSITION IN
ERITREA WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY TENUOUS.

2. NOTWITHSTANDING PRESENT CLEARLY IDENTIFIED THREAT, OIC
NAVCOMMUNIT NOW UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
(REFS B AND D) TO RETURN TRACT DELTA TO OPERATIONAL STATUS
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND CONGEN HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY SAME
AUTHORITY TO ARRANGE FULL-TIME SECURITY FROM ETHIOPIAN
MILITARY. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, WE HAVE COMMITMENT FROM
GEN. WORKU TO PROVIDE TROOPS TO SECURE SITE, AND KAGNEW
PERSONNEL ARE BEGINNING REPAIRS TODAY (REF C). OIC NAVCOMMUNIT
PLANS STATION SURPRISINGLY WILLING ETHIOPIAN POWER PLANT
OPERATORS AT SITE ON 24-HOUR BASIS, AND US MILITARY OPERATORS
AT SITE DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS ONLY. HE EXPECTS TRACT DELTA
TO BE OPERATIONAL AGAIN BY NO LATER THAN TOMORROW AFTERNOON,
SEPT. 15. UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE, HE PLANS CONTINUED
OPERATION TRACT DELTA ON BASIS OUTLINED ABOVE, PROVIDED ADEQUATE
ETHIOPIAN SECURITY FORCES ARE PROVIDED.

3. FROM CONGEN POINT OF VIEW, CONCERNS CITED REF A DESERVE
MOST SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BY WASHINGTON AUTHORITIES. AS
POINTED OUT BY EMBASSY ADDIS, MASSIVE EPMG PROTECTION OF
TRACT D CAN BE EXPECTED ENSURE CONTINUED INSURGENT ATTENTIONS.
IF NAVCOMMUNIT PROCEEDS ALONG PRESENT COURSE AS DESCRIBED
ABOVE, WE CAN ONLY ASSUME ATTACKS ON TRACT DELTA WILL
CONTINUE. IN VIEW CONGEN, RELIABILITY OF ETHIOPIAN
SECURITY FORCES UNCERTAIN AT BEST, AND WE MAY WELL AGAIN
FIND TRACT DELTA UNPROTECTED VERY MOMENT INSURGENT ATTACK OCCURS.

4. IF, AS APPEARS TO BE THE CASE, KAGNEW COMMUNICATIONS
FACILITIES ARE TO BE MAINTAINED AT ALL COSTS, BELIEVE SERIOUS
THOUGHT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO RELOCATION TRANSMITTING FACILITY
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FROM TRACT DELTA, APPRECIATE PROBLEMS THAT WOULD BE
ENCOUNTERED IN SO DOING AND MUST DEFER TO TECHNICAL JUDGEMENT
OF OTHERS QUALIFIED TO DEAL WITH THIS QUESTION, BUT BELIEVE
THIS IS ALTERNATIVE THAT MUST BE VERY SERIOUSLY ADDRESSED.
ANY RELOCATION EFFORT WOULD, OF COURSE, REQUIRE EXTENSIVE
COOPERATION ON PART OF EPMG, WHICH EMBASSY AND CONGEN WILL
HAVE TO SOLICIT IF IT DETERMINED RELOCATION
IS TECHNOLOGICALLY FEASIBLE.

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5. FROM SECURITY POINT OF VIEW, SHOULD INSURGENT ATTACKS TAKE PLACE AGAINST OTHER KAGNEW SITES, SITUATION FAR BETTER THAN AT TRACT DELTA. OF REMAINING TWO SITES, TRACT BRAVO (OPERATIONAL) CURRENTLY PROTECTED BY 40-50 COMMANDO POLICE ON SITE AT ALL TIMES. REINFORCEMENTS CAN EASILY BE EFFECTED, AS MAIN LOCATION COMMANDO POLICE NOW INOPERATIVE TRACT FOXTROT WITHIN TWO KM OF TRACT BRAVO WHICH ITSELF IS ONLY THREE KM FROM ASMARA. EXTENSIVE ANTENNA FIELD SURROUNDING TRACT BRAVO ALSO ILLUMINATED AT NIGHT. APPROXIMATELY NINE AMERICANS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE ON SITE AT TRACT BRAVO.
AS FOR TRACT ECHO (SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATIONS), PROTECTION PROVLCED BY SECOND DIV. AND SUPPORTING TROOPS WHICH BASED AT ETHIOPIAN OCCUPIED PORTION TRACT ECHO. WHEN ATTACKS OCCURR, SECOND DIV. TROOPS REINFORCE FIRING POSITIONS LOCATED WITHIN US OCCUPIED PORTION TRACT ECHO. OTHER TROOPS DEPLOYED AS PERIMETER GUARDS OUTSIDE WALL AS REQUIRED. APPROXIMATELY 15 AMERICANS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE ON SITE AT ANY GIVEN TIME AT TRACT ECHO. AS DEMONSTRATED DURING FEB. ATTACKS, FUEL TANKS, POWER PLANT, GENERATORS AND OTHER FACILITIES AT BOTH TRACTS VULNERABLE TO ROCKET OR MORTAR ATTACKS.

6. ALTHOUGH ARTICULATED INSURGENT THREAT IS AGAINST US MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN ERITREA, IT NOT UNLIKELY THAT CONGEN COMPOUND TOO MIGHT EVENTUALLY BECOME DIRECT INSURGENT TARGET.
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